was assessed at approximately Rs. 103.38 crore. So far, approximately Rs. 102.90 crore has been paid.

Display of medals by families of deceased gallantry awardees during RD parade

906. SHRI RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state whether the Ministry of Defence would consider a proposal that upon death of Victoria Cross, PVC and other gallantry award winners, their families may be allowed to participate in Republic Day Parade, wearing the medals, so that these stories of valour do not fade away upon the death or passing away of these brave men and women?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): There are no restrictions on the participation of the families of gallantry award winners in the Republic Day Celebrations. However, there is no provision for wearing of medals by the families of gallantry awardees.

Indo-China joint military exercise

†907. SHRI DHARAM PAL SABHARWAL: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that as a result of improvement in Indo-China relations recently, both the countries have agreed for joint military exercise;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) in which areas joint military exercise is being considered upon?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (c) During the visit of Raksha Mantri (Pranab Mukherjee) to China from 28th May 2006 to 2nd June 2006, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between India and China for exchanges and cooperation in the field of defence. The MoU, *inter alia*, provides that both sides will endeavour to hold joint military exercises and/or training programmes in the fields of search and rescue, anti-piracy, counter-terrorism and other areas of mutual interest.

Scrapping of women special entry scheme

908. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government had decided in 2005 to scrap

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

the Women Special Entry Scheme, under which lady officers in the Army could not go beyond the rank of Captain; and

(b) whether it is also a fact that this decision has not been implemented as yet and if so, the reasons therefor and by when it would be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Yes, Sir. Women Special Entry Scheme (Officers) has been closed and women officers in the Army will be inducted through the Short Service Commission Officers entry.

(b) No, Sir.

Bungling in defence purchases

†909. SHRI JAI PARKASH AGGARWAL: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken steps to stop bungling in defence purchases; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) Defence purchases are made in accordance with Defence Procurement Procedure 2005 for capital procurement and Defence Procurement Manual 2005 for revenue stores. These documents incorporate several provisions to ensure transparency, accountability and to cut down on delays in the procurement process. These are reviewed from time to time and as required amendments and clarifications are issued. Constant endeavour is made to ensure expeditious procurement of the approved requirements of the Armed Forces with highest degree of probity, public accountability and transparency in a competitive environment.

Russian warships purchased by India

910. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether India has purchased a warship from Russia recently; if so, the Russian name and changed Indian name thereof;

(b) what actual life of this ship was fixed in Russia, and how far it has been extended to become an Indian Ship, and how powerful it would be;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.